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ABSTRACT

The paper describes an inner city elementary program for mainstreaming seriously emotionally disturbed (SED) students. It is suggested that the program, despite sharing the building with nonhandicapped students, is really physically segregated, and that rigid use of the Distar curriculum does not prepare the student for later creative problem solving. Contradictions between labels of SED and the existence of severe learning deficits are noted, as are questions on the use of physical punishment. The basic question, whether students could ever be successfully integrated into a white middle class school with white middle class expectations, is said to remain unanswered. (CL)

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Integration In A Segregated School: A Study in Contradictions

by

Judy W. Kugelmass

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Even before I set foot in the Evars School, I had had a sense of it. The name alone conjured up images of civil rights struggles and the dream of a better future for the children of Black America. Beyond this image was the impression of educational innovation and community involvement in both the planning and implementation of programming. I had arrived at this sense of the place from having heard its name used frequently around the University as the example of an active school during the sixties. A good friend had done his student teaching there and spoke nostalgically of the open-classroom and creative teaching that went on during that period and how "Evars" attracted large numbers of White middle-class and professional/academic families. Their children were drawn to this "magnet" program because of its focus on creative opportunities as well as attracting their parent's Liberal sensibilities. Somewhere during the past ten - fifteen years, all this has changed. As I was to discover, the "Evars School" is, according to the figures given to me by the principal, 88% Black. Without its Pre-K population, which makes up half the school, Evars is 94% Black. In addition, dramatic changes have come about in the structure and programming of the school. I was to discover, as I pursued my study, that my expectations were the results of slowly fading images of a liberal history that remained in tact only in the form of paradoxes.

I arrived at the school for the first time in order to meet with the principal and to begin to get a picture of the total setting as well as the special education program that had been nominated as an example of successful mainstreaming. Four classes of children labeled Severely Emotionally Disturbed (SED) were nominated as a unit. Although the criteria for selection in this first phase of the project was to be multiple-nominations, this program was selected with only one nomination because it was the only program recommended of elementary level SED kids. This coincides with my experiences in other settings in that"Severely Emotionally Disturbed" children are generally

perceived as the least able to be integrated into regular programs because of their displays of disruptive behavior, which are in themselves taken as the symptom of the handicapping condition. The paradoxical nature of this study continued to become apparent early in my investigation as I tried to get a better understanding of the program and its place in the school.

The school building is located in a decaying neighborhood bordering the University and the downtown section of the city. Driving to the school, one passes two and three story wood framed houses, some abandoned, with broken windows and half hanging on porches, others, occupied and in various stages of disrepair. Here and there a home well kept stands out. Immediately bordering the school building is a large housing project. Constructed of red brick this two and three story apartment complex stretches over a city block. Only Black people are visible on the streets. Continuing to drive, with the school building at your left, you face a major four lane divided highway built on an over-pass through the city. If one was to pass under the highway and wind a few short blocks away, you would be on "the other side of the tracks," at the University and the major city hospitals and Medical Center. Looming above the overpass, facing this neighborhood is the multi-million dollar domed sports stadium now under construction. I couldn't help but wonder, if this neighborhood would eventually become its parking lot, and was struck once again by the financial priorities of our society.

From the parking lot at the right side of the school one gets a historical perspective as to the development of this building. The rear of the building is fifty or sixty years ago what was the entire school. This three story brick structure is hidden from view when you enter from the main front entrance. The city blocks behind it reveal more abandoned and decaying houses and a large factory. It is in this section of the building that the four SED classes are located, along with a Head Start program which is housed on the second floor. The middle section of the school seems to connect the

old building with the modern facade. This section was built in the mid 1950's and a plaque on the first floor shows that it use to be called the Shoton School. The school gymnasium/cafeteria is located on the first floor of this section. As you walk around to the front of the building, the contrast with the view from the parking lot is striking. The new wing of the school, built in the early 60's, is a very modern looking two story grey-brick and concrete form structure. The words "Medgar Evars School" are blazened on the side of the building in foot high, steel letters. Over each of the windows are huge, awning-like concrete forms. The windows are not made of transparent glass but rather are constructed of a translucent plastic, covered by a heavy criss cross wire mesh. The front path leading to the large glass main doors has a modern architectural rendition of an old stone wall running along its side. Several people have commented that the school appears to have the feeling of a fortress. I am struck primarily by the contrast between what one sees from the front of the building and the deteriorating older structure at the back, where the special education program is kept, hidden and separate from the rest.

As you walk into the main lobby of the building, there is a large mural of the Civil rights leader for whom the school was named. To its right is a bulletin board which contains the art work and projects done by pre-school children. This display changed frequently during my visits here. To the left side of the hall, after passing the first corridor which leads to the nurses office, Instructional Specialists' office, teacher's room, and several Pre-K and kindergarten classes, is a large bulletin board, changing monthly with commercially manufactured displays representing each month.

Along side of this display, a smaller bulletin board tells of community news as well as services which may

of interest to many of the adults whom I see coming in and out of the building. The mothers and fathers of pre-school children often accompany the youngsters to and from the building. There have been several bake sales in the main lobby as well as announcements made in the mornings of other community events. On the whole, I sense a genuine attempt to bring the community closer to the school.

The perceptions of many of the personnel here is, however, that the families of most of the children are alienated from school and are therefore very difficult to reach. Dave, a graduate student intern, put it this way, "You have to look at the schools too. It is very threatening. A lot of parents not having the skills to deal with the people at this school, with the verbiage. So how much input can they have when they don't know the system or what their kids should have."

Past the bulletin board, on the left, is the main office. Immediately inside the glass door and to its right, is a bench where one sits to wait for an appointment with the principal. Most often, it is occupied by a child or two who have been sent there for some sort of disciplinary action. On several occasions I have seen children, sitting on the bench, completing their 98th rendition of, "I must not..." The wall behind the bench is glass so all who pass know who has been sent there. Sometimes this serves as an amusing diversion for both the child being punished and those passing by. For the most part, children pass through the halls in orderly fashion, usually in two lines. Depending upon the teacher they are with, they talk quietly to

each other or march silently along, the teacher calling out the names of the offending child and his or her impending punishment. Except in a few cases, I do not get the overall impression of the military like order, but rather a strong focus on discipline.

Facing the bench is an adult height counter which separates the secretaries' space from the rest of the office. There are two secretary/receptionists here, a grey-haired, Caucasian woman in her fifties and a younger, heavy set Black woman in her thirties, a CETA aide. The older woman is in charge and tells me to wait as the principal, Carlita Sharp, is still in another meeting. It has been difficult for me to begin my study as she has never been available when I have called, always being in a "meeting." In addition, she was reluctant to give any approval to my coming here until she got the O.K. from "downtown." I later learn that the "Evars" school is reluctant to allow any research efforts to go on here and that people have either been refused entry or conduct their research without "official approval." The positive focus of this project has, however, broken through this barrier and I have been allowed full access to the school and its staff. After waiting several minutes, Mrs. Sharp emerges from the door to the left of the secretary's station. A child's crayon drawing of her portrait plus several other children's drawings hang on the door, beneath the sign, "Principal." Carlita is a fair-skinned, Black woman in her early thirties. She is about 5'7" with an average build, wearing glasses, which often hang around her neck on a silver chain. Her hair is well-groomed and carefully styled in a fashion that can best be described in the same way as her clothing, i.e., "conservative." Mrs. Sharp has been principal for one year, replacing her former boss when that woman went on to become a "Deputy Superintendent" for the city. Carlita has been at Evars since 1972. She had worked in the capacity of a "Helping Teacher," a person who trains teachers. "...I worked with probationary teachers. I had been a 'Helping Teacher' for about three years and before that I had been

an "Instructional Specialist." So I knew the teachers, the kids, I knew the building and I knew the parents."

The position of "Instructional Specialist" is one that is quite vague and often defined by the school in which one works. Although it seems to carry administrative and supervisory responsibilities, the position is officially a teacher line and therefore carries no real authority. Jean, the "Instructional Specialist" at Evars for the past five years, is a Caucasian woman in her early thirties, with neatly done, shortly curled light brown hair and gives one the impression of being an athletic person, both by the firmness of her medium build and the way she sort of swaggers as she walks. She is generally dressed casually in slacks, a print blouse and low heeled shoes. Both she and Carlita define her position as one of coordinator of resources and programs as well as being responsible for monitoring the academic progress of the regular students in the school. The job description, written in the school "Handbook" lists seventeen separate responsibilities of this position in this setting and includes the coordination of the mainstreaming of students. The 17th role is listed as "etc." and is an expression of the fact that she may be called upon to take on any responsibility that she and the principal see fit. It is not surprising to me that both of these women's perceptions of the mainstreaming process as well as their perspectives on many other issues are often similar. It is also interesting that, for the most part, these perspectives contradict what I later observe as well as the points of view expressed by many of the staff, "in the trenches." It is also not surprising that when Carlita resigns as principal at the end of May, Jean is called upon to become "Acting Principal." Carlita leaves to take a position in "the private sector." The administrative turnover in this school is high, as it is in the other elementary schools in the city.

The principal's inner office is a large room with her desk off to the right and a large round table more to the center of the room than to the left. It is surrounded by eight or more chairs. It is at this table that we talk

and it is here where she conducts all of her "meetings," including Pupil Service, Team Committee on the Handicapped meetings and meetings with each of the teachers on the "regular" staff once a month. At these "staff" meetings conducted in conjunction with the "Instructional Specialist," each child's progress in the regular education program is discussed and charted. The charts for each class hang on the bulletin board across from the round table and present a visible representation of each classes "Levels" in reading, math, and spelling. The Special Ed classes are, however, not represented. These "Levels" are determined by the child's standing on the "Levels Tests" developed by the city. If any child is displaying difficulty in any of the academic areas, then different curriculum approaches are recommended. If problems persist, the child may be referred to the Pupil Service Team for possible referral for Resource Room assistance, "Title I," Reading, Speech Therapy, Social Work intervention, or psychological assessment with the possibility of "labeling," for Special Ed. "Labeling" is seen as the method of last resort and because of this attitude, children are seen in the Resource Room both if they are labeled as mildly handicapped or if they are considered borderline. The Resource Teacher does not work with children in the SED program.

An "Alternative Program" has been developed as a step before labeling kids SED. This program is a self-contained classroom of seven boys, ages 9 and 10, most of whom have behavior problems. They are seen as needing a structured environment and limited movement during the day. They all go out for "Specials," i.e., music, gym, and art, and receive Resource Room assistance. One of these students is now "mainstreamed" on a full-time basis but still getting Resource Room help. It is not apparent to me at first, how these boys and their program differ from that of the four SED classes that I have come to study. Carlita's explanation is that they are being given "A last chance." This seems to indicate that there is a definite stigma attached to being labeled and placed into one of the SED rooms. As I spend more time in this

setting and learn more about the nature of the SED program, it becomes apparent that neither the principal nor most of the other "regular" staff, perceive of the SED program as being an integral part of their school. It is its own mini-school, attached but separate from the rest, in more than just physical location. This program has its own name, the "Learning Center." As Carlita sees it:

> "That whole Learning Center was new last year, the teachers and the teacher's aides. So they went through a lot together, a lot of growing pains and everything but they came out of it as a very close knit, well organized team. They had the discipline set up, they had their rules and regulations, they had their methods of teaching, they share, they do a lot of teaming. And all I do is just reinforce what they do. They handle just about all their own problems down there and it's a team that I'm very, very pleased with. And the teachers in the building are quite pleased with them."

The Instructional Specialist believes that what goes on in the Learning Center is quite different from what occurs in the rest of the school:

> "...I think a lot of people forget that in the Learning Center classes there are only ten kids and two adults and it's a very structured behavior modification type program and point system. And the kids leave at two o'clock. So that the amount of aggression and abuse they may show, may be the same as we have in a regular class. But if you were to take the very same kid and put him in a class of twenty five kids, with only one teacher, no point system, and go all day, you're going to see a lot more violent and aggressive behavior. Sometimes the Special Ed. teachers seem to forget that. They say, 'Look at this kid, he's doing so well, there's nothing wrong with him.' I know this because the first five years that I was here, I referred kids there and I know what those kids were like before they were referred. So that's the problem, the kids may look the same when they're in the Learning Center but it's the amount of people there and the program that they're in."

The Learning Center is contunually referred to as an addendum when I ask for information about the school as a whole from either of these two women. The number of children in the school is reported as, "460 kids, 230 of them being 3, 4 and 5 year olds, 190 regular school-age and 40 Learning Center." Numbers of "teacher lines" are alloted to the school, "aside from Special Ed." Throughout the school, from both the L.C. and regular teachers, there is "them" and "us"; "up there" and "down here."

In the past, the Learning Center ordered its own materials and books,

this year, however, in an attempt to facilitate "mainstreaming" by assuring that all the children in the building were following the same curriculum, Jean ordered the reading programs and texts for the entire school; making the school wide approach to reading, math, spelling and language become "Distar." One must have a complete understanding of "Distar" in order to get a thorough picture of this school and its approach toward mainstreaming. The "Distar" program approaches the teaching of basic academic skills through a systematic and highly structured series of lessons, each built upon what has been learned the previous day. Students and teachers are instructed as to the precise language they are to use in each lesson. The method has always reminded me of the "catechism approach" to teaching and learning. Like its religious counterpart, "Distar" has its believers and proseletizers as well as the heretics, like myself, who tend to see this approach as mechanized and lacking in the opportunity for either student or teacher to develop their creativity and basically as boring. The strongest argument for the use of "Distar," particularly for populations of "deprived" children is that, "it works." There are no aspects of the sequence of decoding skills needed for learning to read or for the development of proper language skills that are left to chance. Each bit of minutia is covered on a day to day, step by step sequential manner, with a large degree of reinforcement provided by workbooks, dittoes, and homework. Instruction is conducted in a small group, seated in a semi-circle facing the teacher. This is done preferably in the same location in the classroom each day. The children's success in one lesson becomes the motivation for the next. By having a "Total Distar School," children can ideally move from one room to the other and be assured a consistency in approach as well as knowing that a child on "Lesson 53, Distar I Reading," has the same skills as any other child on this step. The children learn to respond in unison and one can hear their voices fill the halls as they respond in the loud, word by word fashion that I have come to identify as "Distareese."

A typical Distar Language Lesson begins with the teacher saying, "Get Ready," she may hold up the "Distar Teacher's Book," point to the picture and say, "The boy is on the horse. Where is the boy?" Snap her fingers, point to the children and they will respond in unison, "The boy is on the horse."

Although the "Instructional Specialist" and the Principal are its primary proponents, most of the teachers at this school seem to feel positively about the use of "Distar." Betty Olds, a Special Education teacher in the Learning Center described her experience with Distar in the following way:

> "Well, I took my highest group from Day One at the beginning of last year and they are now in the beginning of Distar II. And they're reading. It's just tremendous. The "word attack skills" that they've learned. I might have lucked into getting it across to them but Distar's given me a method. And I know that its been researched enough that, hopefully, they are not skipping things. So I like it. I like it a lot because I see that they like it. They know exactly what to do. It's predictible and successful and I like it."

And yet, with all this predictability and sequential learning, I observed some glaring contradictions as to the actual use of Distar as a method of facilitating "mainstreaming," and its professed use as a method of fitting kids right into the learning sequence they had been experiencing in their Spec. Ed. setting. I had chosen two students from the Learning Center to focus on for this study. Both were often cited as examples of kids who were being "successfully mainstreamed".

However, neither child was able to fit into the sequence that was occurring in the regular class into which he was to be placed. Betty reported that Carl, although the highest student in her Distar reading groups was far below the lowest group in the second grade class he was to go into and so she, "...had to accelerate Carl about double lessons for about two or three weeks, to get him up to M's lowest group." Similarly, Steve's teacher

reported that he had to "...move up thirty lessons and hasn't had any problems," since he's been mainstreamed. In this case, it seems as though Steve was being held back academically by the pace at which the Distar lessons were proceeding in his class. My observations in two regular classrooms indicated that the Distar lessons here are geared toward the rate of learning of the "average" child within each group. In this setting the "average" child is below grade level expected for a child of his or her age. Children are referred to as "bright" if they are at "level." It became apparent to me that Distar benefits the normative population of this school, i.e., the inner-city Black child who is relatively economically deprived, and with limited experiences of the kind that are necessary for academic success. The brighter child, who would more than likely be considered "average" in another school, has the advantage of being at the "head-of-the-class," which may enhance his self image temporarily but ill prepares him for the middle school he has to enter. Although "Distar" has developed new programs to foster "thinking skills," it generally does not prepare the children for the creative problem solving they will need later on. Additionally, being in an essentially all Black school does not prepare the children to interact as well as compete with better prepared White peers. As stated by Sue Brown, the fourth grade teacher I observed, the children are not prepared for the racism they will face when they leave "Evars."

> "The problem I think, outside of here, is, well, I think that the other schools are sort of prejudiced. I look in the newspaper when they name the kids that graduate from high school each year and my husband and I wonder what happened to all the Black kids that we knew. Sure there are lots of 'em that are evil, like I said before, but most of these kids are O.K.. Look at their levels here."

An even more glaring contradiction began to take shape regarding the academic needs of the students in the Learning Center, as perceived by Jean and that which I was able to observe in the Special Ed. classes themselves, as well as what both the students and staff had to say about the academic programs in both settings, and its relationship to "mainstreaming." Jean

repeatedly emphasized that the primary disability of the children in the SED classes is emotional in nature and that therefore it is their behavior that determines whether or not a child is "ready" to be mainstreamed. Her response to my question regarding the preparation given to the regular classroom teacher for the mainstreamed child's academic needs was:

> "Instruction-wise, not too much is done because of the fact that the students are emotionally disturbed rather than academically handicapped. Usually we try to place the students in an instructional group that they can function in. And we ask the teacher to expect the student to be able to function academically as the rest of the class does. Now, there's one student who's a fourth grader who's doing fourth grade math but he's very slow. In that case we tell the teacher that he's not dilly-dallying around when he's doing his independent work, he's just slow and don't force him to get all the board work done like you do the rest of the class. He'll get the stuff right that he does if you push him, he won't be able to take it. ...that's not a severe emotional disturbance, just a slow pace.
>
> Spec. Ed. can get whatever textbooks they want with their textbook money but we agree that it would be easier (for every one to use Distar), because the kids are emotionally disturbed and not retarded, whereas, in that case, the kids might need to have special books. We have them in the same books as the regular class."

These statements were contradicted at the COH meeting I attended, where it became obvious that many of the kids whose behavior is now appropriate do, in fact, have severe learning deficits and therefore could not be mainstreamed because their academic level was far below their chronological age. One of the solutions to this problem here, as in other settings is to relable the kids, if possible. One child discussed was of fifth grade age but had "levels" below fourth grade and although, "his behavior is good," could not be mainstreamed. The school district head of the COH recommended that he be kept in the SED program until his academic skills can be improved and then return him to a regular program. The psychologist asked, "If he qualifies for EMH, does that open any options for you? Could we label him L.D. if he doesn't fall low enough?" And in another case, the Special Ed. teacher discusses another SED student, "He needs an L.D. program. His behavior is O.K.. We cured him. He is calm now and not aggressive." The Resource Teacher responds, "The deal was, when we took him, was to get rid of the behavior. His primary disability has

been identified as Neurologically Impaired. Its been proven many times. That is now his primary disability and that's the kind of program he needs."

In other cases, the Distar approach may not in fact be the appropriate program for a child in either the Learning Center or in a regular class. Betty was not aware that Carl's I.Q. fell within the EMR range and had never thought that his difficulty in school might, in part, be due to academic frustration. In addition, his Bender-Gestalt performance showed a number of indices of perceptual disfunction. In spite of this and the recommendation from his former school that he not be placed in a Distar program, as he had failed at it there, he repeated Distar in this school. He is still behind the other students in the regular classroom in which he is mainstreamed, although he is chronologically a year older and had been through this program once before. With all of these deficits, Carl is the highest functioning student in his Learning Center class where, according to Jean, "the students are emotionally disturbed rather than academically handicapped." My observations in this class revealed a group of boys whose background was extremely limited. Only one of the seven students had ever heard of a volcano, never the less have the slightest awareness of the eruption of Mt. St. Helens, which filled the media and excited every other child I knew at the time. The intertwining of their experiential and academic deficits with their poor self image was evidenced repeatedly in this class. It became particularly apparent in one child when he expressed his reluctance to go to music class and began to act out once he arrived in that room. He was unable to read the words to the song they were to learn that day. The music teacher expressed her understanding of the problem, "You know, they just get something in their head about not being able to read. They are real smart and could do it. I don't know what approach they use up there but they should try something else, rhythm or something."

Because the focus of the Learning Center is on the children's behavioral problems, those students who do not have glaring academic deficits may fall

behind their peers in the regular program. As I observed these students, I could see the difficulty the teachers would have in getting them to attend to academic tasks so that they could get to the point of being "ready" to be mainstreamed and thereby have some appropriate peer models. Although appropriate behavior is seen as the key factor in getting the child out of the Learning Center, fitting in academically is of equal significance. As Jean, the Instructional Specialist put it, "We cannot expect a teacher to set up a separate academic program for one kid. That's not mainstreaming." Betty Olds, Carl's Learning Center teacher, feels that there are some major difficulties with this approach:

> "...There is a big element of "Catch 22" with that. They are sent to us for behavioral clean-up and if we do our jobs right and we clean up their behavior, and they have lost a year in the process. Or if they came to us a year behind, we keep them a year behind and there are big problems with that. We do get into a good deal of academics but, you can't do everything in a vacuum. It is changed through the academics but there never has been a week where I haven't lost at least one group because of a behavior problem. So there is no way I could run my groups as thoroughly as M. does."

The students in the Learning Center recognize that the academic demands placed on them in this setting are not as stringent as those in the regular class. As two boys who were playing pool in the "Game Room" of the Learning Center explained, in regular school you never got to earn points so that you could play, "...but just work all the time." Steve, a mainstreamed student, feels that the regular students are very aware of this:

S: "They think that when you go to the Learning Center that it will be easy and you won't have to do so much work."

Me: "It's not true?"

S: "It's true. Ms. D's class does a bunch of work."

Me: "So they're right? It is easier down here."

S: "It's hard up there."

Me: "Is that one reason that you didn't want to go?"

S: "I didn't want to go up there and I still don't want to go up there but I have to."

It is apparent that "mainstreaming" is defined in this setting as the process by which a child who no longer exhibits "behavioral difficulties" is returned to a regular program. He is considered as "ready" for this process only if his academic performance, as well as his behavior, can match up to that which exists in a regular class, with children who are at least one year within his chronological age. Although this is somewhat easier to achieve at "Evars" where the "average" student is functioning slightly below "level," it has been made difficult by the fact that there are only two regular classes at each grade, i.e., 190 kids in the regular program and 34 Learning Center students. In the third grade, the problem became particularly difficult as there are 50 third graders and 15 kids in the Learning Center who are the same age. The regular class teachers became alarmed at the possibility of their classes becoming filled with the SED students and so a program was worked out whereby "mainstreaming" was defined in more stringent terms and the process tightened, so as to allot only two "slots" for mainstreaming in each regular class. The process became additionally complicated when the two oldest classes in the Learning Center were not removed from this building in September as planned. They contain fifth and sixth grade age students and "Evars" regular program only goes up to the fourth grade and so there are 15 fourth and fifth graders to be mainstreamed into the regular fourth grade. Although these two classes shall be removed from this building next September, Jean found herself in a position this year of having to define mainstreaming in a way that was feasible, given the limited "slots" for each kid. She recognizes that "mainstreaming" can mean giving a troubled youngster the opportunity to "feel good" about himself because he is being given the opportunity to interact with kids in a regular class. As she put it, "...an ego building thing." Or it could mean what Dan, Steve's Learning Center teacher, would like it to mean, an opportunity for the kids in his class to have positive role models. He would like to see each of his kids in a

regular class for at least an hour a day so that they have a concrete idea of what is expected of them. He has come to accept the fact that mainstreaming is not defined in that way, in this school.

Jean explained the process that she and the Resource Teacher went through in defining "mainstreaming" this fall:

> "Well, once we looked at these numbers it became clear that we had to define what we meant by 'mainstreaming.' K. and I met with the special ed. teachers to define what we meant and we came up with the compromise of "the nine week mainstreaming," where the kid is already to go, and the "full-year mainstreaming," where the kid has some things and he is going to be gradually phased in. And then we said, 'O.K. how many kids do you have, looking at your class now, that are ready for this and how many ready for that.' It turned out that there were about eight kids, eight to ten kids in third, fourth and fifth grades. Six kids in fourth and fifth grade, and about four or more in third grade and three second graders. Two were ready to start right away, of the second graders, for the 'nine weeks,' Carl and James. And then they'd be gone and then we'd be able to slot them in, two at a time.
>
> ...we had a meeting with the Special Ed. Department and the teachers and the regular ed. teachers and we discussed it. We decided that a fair compromise would be no more than two kids being mainstreamed in a room at one time. So the teachers do expect to have possibly two kids being mainstreamed in their room. That way we were able to deal with the Special Ed. teachers saying, 'Hey, you're forcing this kid to be stuck in Special Ed. another year. He needs to be mainstreamed.' And the Regular Ed. teachers saying, 'Hey, it's not that easy.' So we agreed on a compromise and they are expecting to have kids."

Every staff member in this school with whom I spoke felt very positively about the communication that went on in September at this meeting. They felt that this meeting plus the In-Service on mainstreaming that went on during that summer, helped them to understand the needs of the other staff members and of the children and therefore helped to make the mainstreaming program, as defined here, a success. "Communication," was cited as the most positive aspect of these meetings. The Principal and the Instructional Specialist felt that this communication went both ways. Carlita described what went on at the summer meeting this way:

> "Well, they first of all explain what the district means by 'mainstreaming.' ...starting out at the 'most restrictive' and moving gradually to the 'least restrictive' whereby taking students out on a half hour basis into a regular class where they would go maybe for reading and then come back. If they

> could handle that, after a certain amount of time, then expanding maybe to a math session. If they could handle that, then expanding and expanding. But, prior to all of that, sitting down with the regular classroom teacher and talking to them about what the child has been doing in the classroom. What type of class the special ed. class has been? What types of reward systems have been used? What types of discipline has been used? What type of discipline is in the class? What type of rules do you have? How can we coordinate this so that when the child comes to the classroom he will be able to function? And then, after sitting down with the teacher and going over this, then talking about the time period for mainstreaming."

Although this description coincided with the process described by members of staff in both regular and special ed. programs, it was generally agreed, by the Learning Center staff, that the burden of accommodation fell on them and their students. Betty Olds expressed her perceptions in this way:

> "I feel like it was one way. I never had any feeling of resenting it or any negative thing. That's just the way it is. But that is the way it was (at the in-service). The onus is on us to modify the kids to fit into that mold. I think that we had the square pegs and we're the ones that had to round it out."

Dave, a graduate student intern attended the fall meeting. His impressions were:

> "I feel that there was good communication and everybody was open to mainstreaming, more than in other schools, because of the administration and the people involved in setting up this model. Maybe not what I thought it would be, was that the regular teachers were saying, 'Here is our format. Now the SED kids must fit, in some way.' I felt that the SED teachers and kids had to make all the accommodations. These are the expectations that the kids are going to have to deal with in this particular situation...right now the kids have to do all the changing."

Dan, Steve's Learning Center teacher, feels that more needs to be done with regular teachers to help them get a better understanding of the Learning Center and its students.

> "I know because I've talked to a lot of classroom teachers who are good friends of mine, that it's hard for them to deal with the situation that you've got nine kids in your classroom, they've got thirty kids in their classroom. You're sending a kid to them. It's a very hard concept to deal with and I think it is forever going to be one. Because they are afraid they haven't had the training in dealing with special kids. I think that's one.

> Maybe an in-service on that type of thing would be good in-service because I think it would make them feel more secure. ...they have all these misconceptions about this kid who's coming in. He's going to be a wild man.

My visits to the Learning Center and the special education classes of two "successfully mainstreamed" students clarified many of the concerns expressed by the Special Ed. staff. Observations of the behavior of students in these classes, as well as the structure of their program were contrasted to that which I was able to observe in Carl and Steve's regular class placements. This enabled me to get a better understanding of the process in which they were involved, the problems encountered and some of the approaches used in dealing with these issues.

The most glaring contradiction in studying the Learning Center as an example of "successful mainstreaming," at first seems to be its physical location. How can a program that is set apart from the rest of the school building, at the furthest end of a long narrow corridor, down a flight of stairs, and hidden behind double doors that are reminiscent of a hospital ward, be considered to be integrating students into a "least restrictive" environment? The relativity of the concept becomes clear when you realize that up until 1977, the Learning Center was a program operated by a local "Community Action" organization. The program was not a public school program and was located downtown in the office building operated by this agency. Then, as now, the students in the program were essentially all Black, acting out, aggressive boys. The L.C. is composed of 34 boys, 28 of whom are Black, ages 7-12. In 1977, the school district, prompted by P.L. 94-142, took over the program and put it under the auspices of Special Education. I am not able to say with certainty why the program was housed at "Evars," but there is a good deal of evidence to support the conjecture that it was the most efficient way for the city to deal with this very difficult population. Voluntary busing, declining enrollment and the end of the "Magnet" programs at "Evars," left this new building with a good

deal of classroom space. However, I think it would be somewhat naive to believe that space was the only consideration in placing the Learning Center here. It seems to me that it would have made more sense, programmatically, to spread these children throughout the city and therefore avoid the contaminating effect that these boys have on one anothers behavior. Every teacher commented how each kid tends to, "...set the other off." I was able to observe this continually in the classroom and hallways. Laurie, the Social Work Aide, could feel this happen on a program wide basis, since she interacted with all the students, each day. "It's been one of those days today. You know there are times when you just can feel that it is going to be an impossible day. It's contagious. All the kids seem to get super high at the same time. At other times everyone is real calm and we all wonder. It's real strange." Carl expressed his awareness of this, "There's too much trouble there. Lots of fights and kids get you in trouble. They're always starting stuff." Even on a day that I visited that was agreed by all to be a "good day," the level of non-verbal tension and activity left me exhausted and wondering how I ever managed to work with a classroom of "emotionally disturbed" children.

A little detective work revealed a possible reason for placing the Learning Center in this building. A brochure sent to all parents of elementary age children in this city, to inform them of the voluntary busing program, lists those schools which can be transferred into or out of. Examination of this pamphlet revealed that "Evars" is the only school in this city into which Black students cannot transfer and out of which White students cannot transfer. I asked the Social Work Aide, Laurie, to find out where the students in the Learning Center had gone to school before their referral to Special Ed.. Of The thirty four that were enrolled at that time, only three were referred from 'Evars." Two of those three are children she referred to as, "real problems, very disturbed." The third had been sent directly after having spent some time at a residential treatment center. She went on to explain that just

about all the other Black, Learning Center kids are from this neighborhood and would have gone to this school if it wasn't for voluntary busing. They were too acting-out and/or aggressive for the predominantly White schools to which they were bused and so were labeled SED and returned to "Evars," via the Learning Center. All the teachers I spoke with felt essentially the same way, i.e., that most of the Learning Center kids would never have been labeled as SED if they were students at Evars but rather see them as victims of White Middle Class expectations. Mary F., Carl's regular second grade teacher, feels that he is an example of a kid who got caught in this type of situation. Speaking of her regular second graders:

> "I've got a lot of kids that I think, if were in another school, would be in a Learning Center situation. He's all right in this room. I think if you took Carl and put him in S.H., he'd be right out. ...a very middle class school where he'd freak them right out. I'm just a lot more use to that. ...in this class I've got 22 kids and there are probably 6 or 7 that I am constantly aware of what they're thinking and what they're doing and he would be one of those, but no more so than the other 6 or 7. ...I don't know that if Carl was at Evars, he would have ended up in the Learning Center. He was at another school."

It became obvious to me that the mainstreaming of certain Learning Center children was successful because their behavior was essentially the same as many of the "normal" children in this setting. Sally D., the fourth grade teacher in whose class Steve is mainstreamed, sees his problems as minimal.

> S: "Like I said, I didn't see that he has too many. Some of the other kids in here have more problems than him. Some of them just don't have no control. They are evil."
>
> Me: "What do you mean?"
>
> S: "Well, they are just plain mean all the time. They don't got no control over themselves. It's like something inside of them is missing. They don't got no discipline."

The concept of "emotional disturbance" is one that is very relative to the normative population with which the "deviant" individual is being compared. What my observations of this setting seem to indicate is that students are "successfully mainstreamed" only when they are no longer considered deviant.

Since many of the Learning Center students are essentially the same as a good many of the other "normal" problem kids in regular classes, only those students who are the best, both academically and socially, get to fit into one of the few "slots" available in the regular program. Laurie, the Social Work Aide in the Learning Center, feels that they have to be harder on their kids because when it comes time for them to be mainstreamed, these students have to be better than the other kids. This feeling was reflected by other Learning Center staff. She explained her perception of this situation in the following way:

> L: "Because their expectations are that the kids are going to act bizarre. So much, that they actually look for it."
>
> Me: "The expectations of the other teachers?"
>
> L: "We've had a lot of problems in terms of that and mainstreaming our kids. The particular issues are either that they are stunned that the kids can behave or, 'When is he going to do it?' And I don't even know what 'It' is or that a kid is not ready to go back to a regular room because he doesn't know how to behave when they already have another kid in the room who may also be just as unappropriate."

The physical education teacher and lunch room supervisor feel that the Learning Center children are often better behaved than many of the classes of regular students with whom he interacts:

> "Learning Center kids will do more than the other kids. They have learned that they have problems with their temper and to tell the teacher to prevent blow-ups. As a matter of fact, in gym-class especially, the Learning Center kids are better than the regular kids.... I have had only one fight with Learning Center kids and about ten with other kids. Here, at lunch, there is rarely a problem."

The proof of this situation can be best illustrated by the case of "James Jones." Every staff person with whom I spoke, cited this boy as the primary example of "successful mainstreaming." In fact, he is the only student who has ever completed the "nine-week" sequence whereby a student is gradually phased into a regular program over a nine-week period until he is able to be in the regular program "full-time." At the end of successful completion of this time period, he is returned to his home school and a regular program.

Each person was quick to add that they never had any idea why he was sent here in the first place. He never acted out or presented any sumptoms of bizarre behavior and he was able to perform on "Level." In spite of the fact that each staff person felt that he was not "emotionally disturbed," each one recommended that I use him as an example of "successful mainstreaming."

A paradox exists in the general belief that the "Learning Center" is harder on its kids than is the regular program. The assumption is generally made that the special education program offers a greater degree of structure and predictability than that which exists "upstairs." My observations of two classes in each setting revealed the opposite to be the case, in most instances. Both the second grade and fourth grade teachers that I observed and interviewed see themselves as highly structured teachers whose focus is on discipline. Mary, the second grade teacher, is a Caucasian woman in her early thirties, small and thin, and casually dressed. She has been teaching for eight years, here at "Evars," and has taught several different grade levels.

> "I've always been very, very, structured, even back when I first started. Well, when I first came I was a new teacher too, so it's (Evars) changed or I've developed a lot. But I've never been too big on 'open classrooms,' in this situation. But not to say it wouldn't work in some other situation."

"This situation," refers to a setting in which the majority of the children come from "deprived" backgrounds and are lacking many of the basic academic and social skills necessary for success in our public school system. Sally D., the fourth grade teacher I observed echoed Mary's sentiments. She is a Black woman of the same age, of medium build, and in her last months of pregnancy.

> "Kids have got to learn discipline. It's like I tell them, when they leave here and go out into those other schools, those teachers are not going to put up with any nonsense. So I want these kids to learn that now. ...I have five girls and nineteen boys in my class. I guess it's because I'm stricter than the other fourth grade teacher and so they give me the hardest kids to handle. I don't believe that kids should be up and out of their seats and wandering around the room. They have to have discipline, be in their seats and concentrating in order to learn anything.

> I want them to grow up to be men who can take care of themselves and their families. I met a kid the other day. He was a kid I use to know over here. He's about sixteen years old and he's on the street already, with nothing to do. I don't want these kids to end up that way. Other schools will just throw them out, so I give them the discipline here so that they can make it. I'm hard on them I know but I never say anything to them that I don't mean and they know ahead of time just what I'll do if they get out of line."

Observation in both these classrooms proved that these women act on their words. Their styles are very different, however, Mary being softer in her approach and using a good deal of positive verbal reinforcement. Her classroom is full of interesting materials and art work, as well as displays of the children's work. Her seating arrangement for the children is in three clusters, reflecting their "Distar" groups. The seating arrangement encourages the children to interact with one another. However, during "work time" the children must work silently at their seats. The mornings work is spelled out carefully to the children each day and so it is highly predictable. The children can earn "points" and win a prize after the accumulation of a given number of points. My overall impression of this classroom was that it was one that the children enjoyed. Most of the students completed their work in a relaxed and interested manner. If a child was having difficulty, Mary was available to help, provided that the child ask for help in the "proper" way. There were a great many distractions in the flow of the school day. In addition to my frequent visits, which the children acknowledged with friendly smiles from their seats, other teachers and staff were continually coming into the room. Kids were going in and out of the class to go to the nurse's office for cut fingers, bloody noses, etc.. None of these events seem to disturb the smooth flow of the room. Mary remained soft spoken and attentive to the children through it all. Carl was an integral part of the room. It would be impossible to identify him as "handicapped" in this setting.

Sally's style of discipline and structure are quite different, and often disturbing to my White, Middle class sensibilities. As in Mary's classroom,

the mornings work is spelled out carefully and the children know exactly what is expected of them each day. The rules for proper behavior, in this case, as in the other, are well known, i.e., stay in your seat and complete your own work, silently. Unlike Mary, Sally is often harsh in her tone towards the children and shows a minimum degree of flexibility towards the children and any difficulty they may express regarding their work. I have no way of knowing whether or not she would yell, "shut-up and sit down," to all the children or does so only to those kids she feels need this way of being approached. In one instance, a child was helping another and she called out, "You shut-up, sit down and get into your own seat. If she don't know what to do, that's her problem and not yours." Sally's approach can best be summarized as, "no nonsense," and is symbolized by the physical environment of the classroom. The desks are in traditional rows, facing the front blackboard and the teacher's desk. There is no art-work in the room. The days assignments are written on the blackboard as are two short lists of names under the headings "No List" and "100 Club." These lists represent a behavior modification type approach used with the students. Being on the "No List" means losing priviledges, while the "100 Club" means a reward. Steve stood out in this room both because he was the only white youngster in this class and because he arrived late in the morning, staying only for one hour, to complete his reading assignment.

Both these women see their roles as often being surrogate-mother for many of their students. Mary approaches this role by her behavior towards the children in the classroom by being very nurturing and showing concern over their physical as well as intellectual and emotional well being. Sally, with all her harshness and apparent inflexibility, likewise sees herself and is seen by many of the children as a "mother-figure." One of the most striking ways that this is manifested is in her contact with each of the children's families. Whereas Mary only contacts families when there is a problem or on appointed conference days, Sally visits every home at the

beginning of each year and continues to do so throughout the school year.

> "I go to every kids house and visit with their families. They really like that and it helps me to get to know the kids. They know that I'm in the neighborhood and can stop in anytime. Some of the families are real good and you can see it in the kids. These kids like me to see their parents too and the kids that are having problems don't feel like I'm just picking on them. ...You know when I can't figure out what's happening with a kid, when everything that I try here doesn't work, I'll go to the house again and it doesn't take me long to know what the problem is. I just go there, spend some time, look around and there it is, as clear as can be and I understand why this kid is having problems."

Like all "good teachers," Sally and Mary have the uncanny ability to know exactly what is going on in their classrooms at all times. By the time I visited the rooms, the children were aware of their teacher's scanning skills and knew that they had not bother trying "anything." The disciplinary techniques used by these women were identical; losing priviledges, staying after school, writing 100 times, "I must not...," or paddling. Paddling is seen as a last resort tactic and used both when the teacher is worn out and when she wants to scare either the offending child or the whole class. The children know what to expect and the teachers have equal expectations from all the children, regarding acceptable behavior. Mary expressed her feeling on this in the following way:

> "I think that it's just a matter of expectations an awful lot. I expect Carl to act just like the rest of them, absolutely, and I think what happens a lot of times is that people look at him and say, 'Oh, he's crazy, and they expect him to act that way or allow for some of it. And so, of course he does it. Kids do just about what you expect of them."

Sally expressed similar sentiments regarding her treatment of Steve. Both of these women contradict what Laurie stated earlier, referring to regular classroom teachers, "Because their expectations are that the kids are going to act bizarre. So much that they actually look for it." In fact, I found that the Learning Center teachers were more prone to this type of thinking than either of the two regular teachers that I met. Perhaps they are unique and it is these women's attitude towards their students that has aided in the "successful mainstreaming" of Carl and Steve.

It is interesting to compare the behavior of the children in the Learning Center to that of the students in the regular program, in order to get a more complete understanding of the issues involved in having these students return to a more normalized setting. Again however, I feel that it is important to point out that "Evars" does not represent the "normal" school environment from which these students came and to which they may eventually return. A total understanding of their behavior is impossible because of the inability to separate the "culture" of the Learning Center and its normative behavior and that which may be the "child's problem." The four classrooms here, which supposedly operate as a "team," have little contact with one another, except to send students to each others "Distar" groups. Each classroom has no more than ten students with a full-time teacher's aide and a Special Education teacher. The teacher turn-over rate here, as in other programs for Emotionally Disturbed children, is high. Of the four teachers, one is a Caucasian male, in his early thirties; two are Caucasian females, in their mid to late twenties, and another is a Black woman in her early twenties. None of the three women will be returning next year. Except for a new permanent "substitute," all are certified in Special Education. There are four female aides, two Black and two Caucasian, in their twenties or thirties. None of these women have had any formal training in working with "Emotionally Disturbed" children, although this was promised to one when she took the job. I observed these women as being very caring and warm and therefore able to provide a lot of the nurturing that many of the children here seem to long for. However, neither of the two that I closely observed had the skills or training necessary for the academic tasks they were often left to handle.

The "Social Work Aide," functions in the capacity of a social worker but is a certified Special Education teacher. She has, on several occasions, referred to herself as the "Principal of the Learning Center." Carlita, the building principal, sees her as the person who knows most about the workings

of this program and is its organizer. Her office is located in the central part of the wing, so that she may see all the classes from her desk and any event that may be occurring in the hall. The rear of her office contains the "Time-Out" room, where children are sent if they have not been able to conform to the rules of their classroom and need to be separated from the rest. This hopefully cools off the child without giving him reinforcing attention as well as removing him from the room and the contaminating effect that his behavior may have on the other students. In my many visits here, the Time-Out room was always occupied and often, there were children sitting in Laurie's office as well. Because this section of the school is very old, it has a decaying feeling to it. There are attempts to cheer things up by a bulletin board which the children decorate and the occasional poster in the hall and childrens' art work.

Laurie is a woman in her late twenties, thin and casually but expensively dressed. She looks as though she might have a "Eurasian" heritage, with dark hair and almond shaped eyes. She continually chain smokes in her office and is usually drinking a soft drink or eating candy. She tells me repeatedly that she hates her job and wished she would get fired. Her primary role here was intended to be that of a liaison between the home and the school. However, she reports that she rarely makes home visits except if she needs to have papers signed or if a child is having severe problems. She sees herself as having "burned-out" after one year of trying to deal with the parents to get things done for the kids. Now, she will only spend time with "good parents," i.e., those that are receptive to her suggestions and will go along with what the school wants for their kid. She sees a lot of the problem behaviors that the kids exhibit as the result of their home environment. "They grow up in aggressive homes and in aggressive neighborhoods. And they are role modeling the roles they have to model."

Both Steve and Carl's parents are seen by Laurie as being generally cooperative. She feels that most of the parents will go along with whatever they are told, when the recommendation for mainstreaming is made. This certainly was the case as far as Steve's mother is concerned. Her response to my question about her feelings toward Steve's program was, "Whatever the teachers say is best for him is O.K. with me." Both Laurie and Dave see her as, "One of the better parents." The issue in Carl's case is somewhat more complicated and is one that Laurie says she has seen before. After a short time in the Learning Center, his teacher felt that Carl was ready to be mainstreamed, as he wasn't exhibiting any of the bizarre and babyish type temper tantrums that had been evidenced at his former school. It was recommended that he be put on the "nine week" mainstreaming, with the goal at the end of this period to be his return to his former school. Mrs. F. agreed and he did well all along this process. When the COH meeting was called and she was called in for what everyone was sure would be a blanket approval of his return, she did a "turn-around" and asked that he remain in this setting. No one is really sure what caused her to change her mind but Laurie feels that she never really understood the nature of Carl's placement.

> "And often times we get, 'I don't want my kid moved. I want him to stay in a small classroom.' Those are the hardest ones to work with because they don't see moving as a positive thing. ...What I have to do, it's my job, to go out and tell them where the school is coming from. And sometimes I do and sometimes I don't. ...A lot of them were upset by the way it was presented to them by the other school. You know, what the other school told them about why their kid is coming here in the first place. Well, you'd also be amazed at how many parents have no idea why their kids are here. They think that they're here because it's a small classroom and they can learn better."

Whatever Mrs. F.'s motives, Carl was allowed to remain at Evars and was officially changed to "full-year mainstreamed." He comes to the Learning Center now only for a half-hour a day "Distar Language" lesson, as he is far behind the other students in Mary's second grade language group.

As a result of her experiences last year with the students here, Laurie has come to have certain expectations about the kinds of things that work. One morning I observed a child being paddled and verbally assaulted by both Laurie and his teacher. The teacher had obviously been pushed to her limit by the entire class which had been hurling obsenities at her. This White, well dressed, reading teacher had just taken over the class as a replacement for the former teacher who had recently resigned. Humiliating the child seemed to be the only way that both women could vent their frustration and anger and then return to more of the same. Laurie's perspective on this incident and the use of physical force is that it is necessary because this is the approach used at home and therefore the only thing that works. Betty Olds feels differently:

> "I have stopped paddling and the kids have quieted down. In Mary's room, it may calm the kids down but here it only makes things worse. Here, kids are beaten often and inconsistently at home. They have a low tolerance for frustration, just as many of their parents do. Many of the parents seem confused, maybe in between jobs and wrapped in their own problems. Of the nine kids in this room, only one lives with both parents and they are racially mixed and this causes a lot of problems for this kid."

The use of physical force as a method of handling aggressive behavior presents the obvious paradox of, "violence breeding violence." If this method really "worked," then the aggressive behavior exhibited by the Learning Center students should have been extinguished by this point in the school year. It is certainly a fact that the children in this program see "mainstreaming" as an opportunity to get away from the possibility of being paddled, as Steve and Carl and several other Learning Center students have indicated to me.

Betty Old's Learning Center class is the first room on the left as you enter the wing, and directly next door to Laurie's office. She is a young Caucasian woman, well groomed and madeup, but casually dressed. This is her second year as a teacher, both of which have been here. This room was once used as a regular classroom and so is quite large. The space is separated

into three sections by permanently installed dividers. The teacher's desk is at the front of the room and the aide's desk at the back. The children's desks are located in the space you first see upon entering the room, and it is here that they complete most of their work. The other two sections of the room are used for "Distar" and other individual lessons. The room is decorated with posters and other commercially made materials. In spite of these attempts to decorate, the room has the same shabby feeling that one gets throughout the Learning Center. At the front of the room, taped to the blackboard is the "Good Times" chart, an elaborate points system whereby the children can obtain priviledge or buy things at the "store" for exhibiting "appropriate behavior." Unlike the expectations of the teachers I spoke with in the regular program, Betty has individualized her behavioral expectations for each child. Next to each child's name are several sentences indicating what is expected of him in order to get "points."

> "This is my version of class rules. But I don't like having class rules because some kids can meet all the rules and still not be growing and other kids could never hope to. So each kid has their own set of rules. ...It's difficult for me to keep my standards in line, you know, I don't want to set them too high. But I don't want to compromise either so it's a constant battle. So in other words, I would love them to be like Mary's class but if I expected that of them, it would be mass mutiny. Well, most of them any way. I'm not saying that just because they were referred here they are automatically bad, but for some of them it is the case. They can't do it, that's why they're here in the first place."

The behavior exhibited by the children in this classroom is beyond a doubt far from what would be expected or tolerated in either of the two regular classrooms I observed. The children are continually calling out, disrupting each other, and often show total disregard for either Betty or her aide. My presence at first, was totally disruptive to them. One of the boys was convinced that I was "looking at him," and became particularly disturbed by this. Even after the boys were use to my presence and I had a chance to observe a "good day," it was far from what I witnessed in the regular classroom setting. The supposed "structure" of the class was constantly disrupted by the children's

arguments with each other. For the most part, Betty seemed ineffectual during these outbursts and the "point" system seemed to have no effect on the boys behavior. I did not observe this "behavior modification" program being used in any consistent fashion.

How then was Carl able to get out of this setting and be "successfully mainstreamed?" The answer to this seems to lie in the fact that this was probably never a child who was truly "emotionally disturbed." His records indicate that he is somewhat limited intellectually and has some mild perceptual deficits. He and his twin sister, who is quite a bit brighter than him, were bused to a school in the University section. The academic demands were probably too stringent and it is generally felt that the relationship he had with his teacher was poor. Carl has a good deal of difficulty verbalizing his feelings and is often able to manipulate by throwing temper tantrums. He did this at his new school, often screaming in the hallways. He was referred for psychological testing, labeled SED and sent to the Learning Center, back in his old neighborhood school. Betty was convinced that he didn't belong in this setting after only a short period of observing Carl in this setting. Carl himself told me that he wanted out of the Learning Center because kids are paddled there. Although he never was paddled, he was terrified of the prospect, having seen it done to other kids. Fortunately, he was not in Mary's class early in the year when she too paddled kids, occasionally. When he did have some difficulty in Mary's class, she stood her guns with him rather than sending him back to the Learning Center because she did not see him as that different from many of the other children in her class. Carl is now "unofficially" considered to be a full-time student in Mary's class, coming to her room from the bus and staying there for all but one half hour when he returns to Betty's room for "Distar Language." Communication between the two women is now very limited.

Steve has been in the Learning Center for almost three years. He is officially a student in Dan B's room and is taking part in the "full-year mainstreaming" program. This was begun in the Spring of this year with the hope that his time in Sally's room could be gradually increased until the end of the school year, with the goal of his returning to a regular program in the Fall. During my time here, he spent one half hour in Sally's room for reading and after two weeks, added another one half hour for math. Sally, Steve and Dan still consider him to be Dan's student, however. Dan, a man in his early thirties, tall, medium built and casually dressed in jeans, has been a Special Education teacher for ten years and has developed a style of interacting with his students that is probably most responsible for Steve's "success" than any programmatic approaches that I witnessed in his room. The students in this class were somewhat older than Betty's students and therefore do not exhibit the immature responses that I witnessed there. Rather, these pre-adolescent boys are more into playing tough and challenging each other with their prowess. Again, the behavior I observed in this setting would not be tolerated by Betty. They are continually out of their seats, wandering around the room and calling out. The slightest distraction seems to take each student off track and again my presence, which practically went unnoticed in either of the regular classrooms, was the source of a good deal of discussion and bold confrontation. "Hey lady, what you writing? You a reporter? Hey, man I think she's a reporter."

The classroom was again a full sized room, divided by a partition into a section for the students desks, a reading section, and a corner in the right hand side of the room where Dan kept his desk and at which he worked individually with some of the boys or had "private discussions" with them. The decorations in the room seemed somewhat inappropriate; scenes from "Life in the 1800's" which showed Currier and Ives prints of White people's lives and none that indicated that slavery even existed. There were pictures from a calendar of scenes from places around the world which barely related to the

seasons as these boys experience them. On the front board was the chart for this classes' point system, which I did not observe being used. There were several newsprint posters at the side of the room that looked as if they had been part of an "affective education" lesson. As in Betty's room, there was a scarcity of materials and that shabby Learning Center ambiance.

I knew that Steve had been here for a long time and that he was sent because of his highly volatile and aggressive personality. Dan explained how he came to the decision to try Steve in the "Full-year mainstreaming" program.

Me: "What made you feel that Steve was ready? What made you come to that decision?"

Dan: "All right. One of the major things we have in here is that minor squabbles between kids can develop into major catastrophes. Everybody is quick to respond verbally to someone else's troubles, and Steve got to a point where he was able to ignore those behaviors if he was working on something. He could keep on task, and if he got off, all I'd have to do was say 'Steve, will you keep busy?' And he'd go right back to work. He didn't continue on. Some of the kids can't stop; once they get into the rut it keeps building up, building up, building up until I have to remove them to some place. Steve got to the point where he wouldn't indulge himself in those kind of things. Another thing was that he got a lot more confident in his work. He would accept it. He use to complain a lot, 'This is too hard, this is...' Before he even saw what he had to do, he would complain about it. And that dwindled almost completely. And then in activities like going on field trips and programs in gym and stuff he was able to handle himself."

Me: "In less structured kinds of things?"

Dan: "Right. For periods of time without getting carried away on things. And just all those things together. Plus we've been talking about it. Steve was one of the ones who was scheduled to be mainstreamed. Last years teacher had recommended that sometime this year we might want to try. So its been something thats been talked about with Steve."

Dan then explained the procedure that was followed once he decided that Steve was ready.

"If I have somebody that I think is ready then I go to Jean, the instructional specialist. And she will work out a placement. If one is available, and then when she does that, I will sit down with the regular teacher, Jean and myself and the regular teacher will discuss the kid, what levels he's functioning at in here, where we

> think he would fit, things that I think are important, you know, reinforcement things that work with him or negative things that work maybe a stare or whatever it might be. And then after that, it's just a matter of setting up a schedule with that teacher. I usually just go up to see Sally once or twice a week."

This is the same procedure that had been described to me by Betty and Jean and is generally followed in the case of all children to be "mainstreamed."

In Steve's case, as in Carl's, there was a period when at the beginning of the process, Steve began to "act-out" fighting with some other students in the cafeteria and refusing to go "upstairs" for reading. He had to be removed and placed in the time-out room, "out-of-control." He broke down and began to cry and told Laurie that he didn't want to go to the regular fourth grade class because he missed Dan and was sure he wouldn't see him again if he was sent to the other room. Steve and Dan were able to work this out but this is still a difficult situation for Steve to face and he did not want to discuss that series of events with me. It is obviously very difficult for many children to separate from the person that has, through their relationship, offered them the confidence and support they may otherwise lack. It is essential, in order for mainstreaming to be "successful" for children with emotional problems, that communication remain in tact between those adults with whom the child has had positive relationships. The adults must, at the same time, be willing to cut loose the parent-like ties that they often develop and transfer these ties to other adults and hopefully back to the parents, when possible. I asked Steve how Dan helped him to not feel so bad about leaving and he said, "Well, he helped me and said she ain't mean and ugly. He said it would be a big step for me and that my mother would be real proud of me."

The question that remains unanswered, regarding the actual success of the mainstreaming process at this school is whether or not the children who have been integrated into "Evars" will be able to be "successfully" integrated into a more "normal" school situation, i.e., a White-middle class school with

White middle-class expectations. Things that "work" here by providing the firm structure and discipline that many of the staff feel are essential for this population of children are often not found in other settings. The price paid by limiting the choices these children have each day and exposing them to learning by only using rote, regimented approaches, is symbolized by the windows found in every classroom throughout "Evars." They are wired, translucent plastic which only let in a minimal amount of light, limiting the distractions created by the reality that lies outside of this building, while also limiting the children's capacity for creative thought which they will need one day, in order to cope with this reality.